Winter 1949

OUTPOSTS

15

Poems, Articles and Reviews

HERBERT CORBY
KATHLEEN RAINE
JOHN BATE
STANLEY SNAITH
ROBIN HALLETT
MARJORIE BOULTON
JOHN SINGER
DANNIE ABSE
JOHN BUXTON
HERBERT PALMER
C. BUSBY SMITH
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FRANCIS BELLERBY
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DAVID MARCUS
ERIC NIXON
IRIS BIRTWISTLE
A. WILBER STEVENS
DEREK STANFORD
JOHN BARRON MAYS
LIONEL MONTEITH
B. EVAN OWEN

Notices, etc.

OUTPOSTS Number 15 (Winter 1949)

Edited by HOWARD SERGEANT and published by
THE MERIDIAN PRESS LTD., 27 Brazennose St., Manchester, 2.

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EDITORIAL

DESPITE the efforts of our more progressive magazine-editors, American poetry is till little known to the general poetry-reading public in this country. A few books have managed to worm their way through the exchange restrictions but these have been the product of established poets (such as Kenneth Patchen, John Crowe Ransom, E. E. Cummings, and Conrad Aiken) who have developed distinct mannerisms of their own which, whatever their merits or demerits, in no way represent American poetry as a whole. With the work of the younger poets, only those of us who are fortunate enough to receive regular issues of magazines from the United States have any acquaintance at all.

We have pleasure, therefore, in publishing a short article, by A. Wilber Stevens, dealing with the work of poets living in the Pacific North-West region. Wilber Stevens is editor of *Interim* (publishing prose and poetry) and is an authority on his subject. We regret that the introduction to poets like Kenneth Hanson, Wardell MacKay, Roland Ryder Smith and the others, is so brief as to fail to do them justice, and we hope that we shall be able to give them more individual representation later. As Wilber Stevens says : " It should be noted . . . . that the seven young natives of the region represented here are not alone in the vanguard of a truly catholic infusion of creative activity."

The summer number of the New Zealand magazine, *Arena*, is a British number edited by Howard Sergeant, and contains an excellent summary by Kendrick Smithyman. The subscription rate for *Arena* is 4s. per annum (single copies 1s.). Those desiring further details of this magazine are advised to write to the editor, Noel Hoggard, P.O. Box 188, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand. Mr. Hoggard is performing an important function in the cultural exchange of ideas throughout the English-speaking world.

It seems that we were somewhat hasty in claiming, in the last issue of OUTPOSTS, to be the first in England to publish the work of the Dutch poet, Hanno Van Wagenvoorde. Owing to delay in the publication of his poem in OUTPOSTS, *Poetry London* can rightly claim that honour. While mentioning this, we should also point out that the sale price of *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Editions Poetry London) by Cleanth Brooks should be 12s. 6d. and not 1s. 6d. as printed. For the mis-statement and typographical error we tender our apologies to Messrs. Nicholson & Watson, the publishers.

HERBERT CORBY

Air Journey East

PLACES on maps come up to meet you : words
on variegated atlases climb and burst
to populations, avenues and gods :
cities resolve out of their names and burn
phoenix-like to glory through the mist
of travellers' tales that drag the magic down.

And names become the bricks of history, tall
ruins smile asunder at the open sky :
the temple dancer, killed in stone, can tell
a dozen legends by her sensitive hands
of history and magic and the way
hearts turn to stone and stone is rubbed to sands.

Now architecture is for bipeds ; no
splendour looks upwards to impassive clouds :
columns, spires, minarets like fountains flow
into the solid flesh of earth, or reach
aim by ascent : the landfall of the birds
alters the colour to nuances of touch.

Lifetimes are small : and feeling does not change
because of miles or measures : though you start
planning each adventure essential as revenge
you will not break the past that's in your eyes
nor all the woman's weeping of your heart :
your past for you has no forgotten place.

Though you would darkly yearn to grasp your old
virtues with soft green girls, repeat the best,
repetition as well as years makes habits cold :
you could forget a name, but what you plan to leave
is all the burning pain that hurt you most,
the ghost that prays each spring that you can love.

You cannot leave, like friends, yourself behind,
but nourish, as the miles go, all you know
of all humanity : only death's the end
where journeys do not carry dreams that hurt,
nor memory reaches you. Wherever you go
you carry passports, visas, language : and your heart,

KATHLEEN RAINE

Signs of the Times

THEY are becoming less substantial every day.
People no longer have faces. You may
Look through almost any of us into chaos.
The machinery of the Last Judgment is in gear,
And the back-cloth on which our cities are painted
Shakes a little as the angels in the wings prepare
To roll up the map of earth into the mind of God.

Things are less stable than they used to be:
Poltergeists and the unconscious remove pens and letters,
Symbols of virility and birth
Are lost in underground trains, picked up by strangers.
Trees shape-shift into nylon parachutes
On which we hope to float safely away
When the great mushroom flowers.

Mental things alone are real, Blake said,
And scorned the creation as dust under his feet.
St. John on Patmos prayed
That the idea of the end should become phenomenal.
We from pure folly work the world's destruction
And hasten on the end the wise desired,
For flames of the last consuming burn within us all.
But most are too easily dazzled by hell's blaze
To know or care whatever phoenix heaven
Is hatching in the everlasting bonfire.

JOHN BATE

Lines for Leon Bloy

FAITH like a raging wound had crazed him,
driven him beyond relief of hope;
to watch the Crucified amazed him,
he grasped at suffering's boundless scope.

He struggled like a drunk to share
the nails redeeming man from woe.
O, flesh of Adam, only you can dare,
God's torment, cry to undergo.

Man born to glory, brother of despair,
death is not the darkness that you know,
blinded at noonday in the murdered air,
by this sweet Blood's most bitter flow.

STANLEY SNAITH

Hiroshima

WHEN in the aftermath
They come to stir the dust
And shards of an old myth
Will they pause before the shape
Of a prone man bitten
By the acid of the lie
Into the coffin step ?
What will it mean to them
That a culture had to die
To bequeath that lightning-written
Cryptograph of stone,
That fossil shame ?

O cry it across the chasm
Of ages, how we struck
In the atom's smithy a sword
That kissed with a comet's breath,
And the town conceived death
In a cyclopean orgasm.
Tell how we bent the knee
To the image of our power,
The blood-fed Upas tree
With its crown against the sky
And root clenched in the bone
Of the wronged and the wrongdoer.

Speak, lips of stone,
And make the ravished town
The bride of Sinai.

ROBIN HALLETT

Van Gogh

BURSTS in his brain the sun and molten flows
Through vein and vein unstaunched; he by the sun
Is dazzled and compelled; yellow and red
The colours of the sun spate in his dreams.
O he is pierced and blooded with the sun.

Through sap and seed self-thrust towards the sun,
In him absorbed all colours, he impels
Cornfield and tree within his clenched brush whirled
Relentlessly to the inevitable
One consummation, the consuming Sun.

MARJORIE BOULTON

Universal Legend

HE gave her a ring and a ribbon braid,
some plants on a silver platter,
a cunning candle, a spool of thread,
and a bowl of broken laughter;

She gave him shoes and a garland of yarn,
gave him a word and a silence,
a plaited basket, some golden fish,
and a dowry of distant islands.

The father gave an emerald eye
and a monitory finger,
the thumb-blacked book where he used to pray
and a skein of tangled anger.

The mother gave milk in a pearly shell,
cardamon seed and nutmegs,
a lamp and a blanket, some beads and a bell,
some sea-stained clothes in a bundle.

At the term of the nine they gave the world
brideprice of blood and water,
and a child that cried to the crabs and gulls,
caught in the net of relation.

JOHN SINGER

The Lost

THE final song, the final ballad, friend, will be of
the wanderer.
He running like a hound and like a hare,
Unsuccoured and unslaked.
He running into twilight, he athirst
For every man's desire and no man's share.
He apelike into night, alone, unstaked,
He naked, shorn of pride, creation's first.

He, nearly blind and small, through desert and desert,
And the ever-sharp-white bitter kiss of morning.
Full-hairy and with hunger.
He kneeling into water like a child,
But for animal half-turn and mammal warning
He searching for the end of anger.
He, in his silence, wild.

The wanderer; they will tell of him, they will tell
Of the sudden spasms, the fits of mad clowning,
And madder melancholy.
His lips will babble prayers, forgotten psalms,
He in his poor song drowning.
As he sings the end of folly
And the supper of eternal calms.

He naked, with the face of you and you,
To the edge of the world, forgotten and alone.
Forgotten and in shadow.
God's poor relation with his bounty spent,
Carving his silly epic on a stone.
Stumbling and singing his search for the last green meadow,
The final place of rest, the peaceful tent.

DANNIE ABSE

Ordinary Heaven

" To a man who knows nothing, mountains are mountains, waters are waters and trees are trees. But when he has studied and knows a little, mountains are no longer mountains, waters no longer waters, and trees no longer trees. But when he has thoroughly understood, mountains are once again mountains, waters are waters, and trees are trees."

(*Old Zen Saying*).

(i)

Who knocks on the window pane ?
Who slams shut the door ?

For most of us the decision was made in our childhood
and we destined either to follow our curse into the Night,
without compass or star, or to remain here forever fading,
listening to our tenanted and tormented souls, watching
our heroic dreams escaping from us like water cupped in the
hands.

There are those then, who never embarked upon the journey,
the husband fretting before the window of the October garden
and his middle-aged wife pottering in the kitchen,
they too have known sometimes the moonlight tugging
at the strings
of the sea, their hands trembling, as if possessed.

But they could never leave, being afraid of the figure
in the corner of the eye, never quite seen ; the sky perceived
as more than sky. They could never dare to simulate
the intimacy of silence, the appalling truth of clocks . . .

Yet supposing once this plump man, now half bald, now gazing
through the drawing room window, the polished table
secure behind him, and the shadows in the yellow roses,
and the yellow petal on the water, supposing he listened
to the sad vocable phantoms and dared, ah dared,
suddenly seeing the moonlight flashing from the wings of
angels,

to undertake the journey (though there was no destination)
would he look back through the trees, at the lit windows,
at the smoke rising from the chimney, and remembering
the blue rug near the firegrate, the yellow flowers, the
armchair,
that which was most known, most loved and most hated of all,
look back, I say, like some sorrowful ghost at all the mortal
heaven, and question : "Is it worth it, worth it, this urgent
quest, trading security for the danger of freedom, the habit
of love for life, hell for hell, the ordinary, suddenly, blooming
beautiful ?"

(ii)

And we also, you and I, have had the sense of falling
but would clutch at some hand to restrain us, the dark making
cowards of us all. Who would go, remembering Columbus
returned dejected and with malady from Cuba,
or Gauguin alone, but without solitude, under the
Southern Cross ?

And others less fortunate, irreconciled to their discoveries.
Yet we have awakened to known rooms we had never visited,
to strange faces smiling at us in a familiar manner,
to roses no yellower than we had forgotten, and always
the tired voice saying what was expected . . . .

September, for example, was like that, coming in
with a red shovel, with golden ribs and veils of sunlight
and ghost of snow in the air—the feeling we had been
there before somehow—these have tempted us, these accidents
where we perceived the other side of the heart.

These have tempted us to set sail with our little accoutrements—
but what I'm trying to say is : if only we, you and I, could
afford
to wait for the ordinary beautiful, for lightning to reveal
the nearest landscape, silhouette of paper house and paper tree
retained in the surprised retina, or lovers caught as with a
camera
going away with all their gentleness to all the living . . . .

If we could stumble once more upon the broken experience
with eyes, ears, hands, heart, all broken like some broken gate
and all images, sounds, forms, wisdoms enter, then our hell
would at least recede and we be no more blinded by the
ordinary beautiful.

(iii)

Who knocks on the window pane ?
Who slams shut the door ?

4 p.m. December. Snow. This year we hear snow falling on snow
with its harsh silent discord, snow falling into the sea
with its loud echoes of silence. This evening, the newspaper
lies on the sofa, with its little trickle of blood, with its pages
of oaths, gesticulations of orators, the demagogues' bird-like
frenzy ;

and outside the half-idiot and all the white, the very white
sacrifice of those who journey down like snow from
the crucified sky, who drizzle into the soul despondently.
We should not be afraid when we see snow fall
when heaven melts on our faces with its quiet stare
when the sky melts in our hair and against our cheeks
like divine tears, we should not be afraid.

Elsewhere down the street, Night arrives with a tinkle
of lights behind curtains, and they go, the wanderers,
the children of the dead, down down slowly, scattered by wind,
pressing their white faces against interrupted windows.

Who knocks on the window pane, but the child, the future ?
Who slams shut the door, but the child, the past ?

And we in an empty room desiring to be that snow, that long
voyage.

If only we could live in the eyes constantly, accompanied
by all upright colours, if only we could read the footsteps
running out into the snow, into the dark, into the unknown
and know that tragedy, *without ourselves journeying*,
if the middle-aged couple could but kiss again, as they kissed
before, and taste light forever in their mouths,
the ordinary angel, our beautiful ordinary heaven.

JOHN BUXTON

To this red rock the sea-birds come

TO this red rock the sea-birds come
Out of the desert of the sea
Where winter-long they swerved and swung,
Silent those echoing waves among,
Nor reckoned where the land might be.

From short horizons in the gales
That fling the waves to foaming crests,
Or wider spaces where the calm
Wins acres huge for winds to farm,
Where they could swim, preen wings and breasts,

To this red-rock the sea-birds come.
And here along the cliffs, in rows,
In gabbling crowds they sit and gaze,
Like Brighton folk on holidays,
Watching the tide that ebbs and flows.

O strange necessity to seek
This frontier of sea and land,
Out of the desert of the sea,
Or London's brick immensity,—
To seek, and not to understand!

HERBERT PALMER

Backwards

WHENCE this strange breath that twines and bubbles
In each long curve of Eternity's blast?
What is this wind that stirs and troubles
Out of the past?

The world goes on, and its ways go under.
A man repents, and his life is made whole.
But still each ancient despicable blunder
Grips on his soul.

C. BUSBY SMITH

Etude: *How tall Time Grows*

(for N. Michael Boyle)

HOW tall time grows,
and with what knowing looks
he hints at life, knowing the ways of death;
how subtle the yew-tree odour on his breath
floats in this room to stain the leaves of books,
famous for fortune-telling, that lean in rows,
shamed by his knowledge of that great event
that's past and future; Time's own element.

How he looks down
and with an ironic smile
shows how he pities the last, short sputtering gasp
at the air, grown tight, that's snatched from the dying's
grasp,
until the mourners round the still body file,
the white, sweet body to a stiff death-mask grown,
naked at last in time, in his dark tent;
the moon at last puts out; all sunlight spent.

How swift Time strides
without knocking into the room
fusty with age, smelling of damp and mould,
a makeshift tomb for those in time grown cold,
asleep for all time in Time's grey grave-gloom
that has not much to show yet nothing hides,
being master at last of that great last event;
Time taking back time that was only lent.

So Time grows tall
at last and we despair
of running from his shadow beyond that dark,
finding upon our souls Time's felling mark;
the cross on the doomed tree, and there's none to spare,
however we cry or rage; not one at all.
Time's the grave landlord knocking for the rent
and all our hours are squandered, the gay years spent.

When Time seemed small
and we much larger seemed
and ran our little glorious childhood out
how could we know he'd put us all to rout ?
And so while Time grew up we played and dreamed
till suddenly our dreams were nightmares all
and Time a giant at Death's order sent
to cast us out of time our time out-spent.

MICHAEL REDGROVE

Sword and Frost

THE white sword chafes in its scabbard—
peace ; we have fought, we shall not fight again,
these are the sterile sierras where no birds sings.

The brown bird choked in its song when the moon was young . . .

I say we shall not fight. Walk hardily
in these hollow lands ; remember the Fisherman's wound.
Here dominant rock is suzerain over the blood
and frost's death-diadem the only crown.

O once the passionate moon was young—
naked and young and infinitely wise
and she, my white Immaculate, that other moon
was throned in Carlyon . . . .

I tell you Carlyon's down, the ravished stones
sleep, that were Carlyon !
Dust has silted in the eyes of queens
and the brown bird died, singing.

Yet the bright
resurgent one, not of the world, chants in a frost of flames . . .

Out, pale and terrible sword ! And we shall walk
sealed, in the frosted lands
under the bones of trees in a drifting mist.

GILBERT PHELPS

The Old Man Who Missed His Way

YOUR road grows blurred, falters and disappears
a faint track through the scant high grass ;
and there you stand, knowing the journey's ended,
in no dramatic drop over the sliced white cliff,
in no triumphant uprush at that old rugged hill,
but lost among the sharp flints and the cane-like grass :
your path has flickered out and ended
a miserable runnel where you prodded with a stick.
Stand in the ways and see : see your broken passage :
see the flares like bobbing lanterns
dip down and flutter out like candles
and leave you in the dusk with streaked flowers among the
grey spiked grass.

Which was the good way ? Did you cut too deep,
too soon ? Where did you leave the old path ?
You started down that cramped back garden
where—lying flat—the hollyhocks soared up
and the clustered back room windows swam round like stars.
Through an orchard where an old woman rambled on
with tales of apple branches flying off like horses,
and the back-street noises came over the high brick wall
and random boots and cans
broke up the greenstick pattern of your thoughts,
where the earth was black and plashed
with trodden apples, and an old tarred tub
where you dipped your oar and bumped down tropic rivers . . .

Who were your mentors ? Was it the old woman with her
tales
or the fierce youth who died in Spain, or the bunched up
figure in the car ?
These paths have lead you here : you must stop now, and
watch
the ants running over the stone, and the old carthorse's muscles
twitch in the sun, and listen to the children's voices over
the hill.

FRANCES BELLERBY

Childless

THE child that was never mine tears, tears, my heart.
For Oh, he suffers, he's in peril, he dies
Alone and terrified, a thousand times.
And I can never reach him. There's no Star
Planned me for him. He would not recognise
My voice, my hand, my candle in his dark.

He was at Hiroshima. I saw him there—
And I've seen him a sleeping infant in a Nanking street
Bunched on a sleeping woman ; why should I weep
And not the passers-by ? O powerless Power,
Inglorious Glory, alone must I endure
The broken trust of his unbroken sleep ?

And I've gathered his feathers when the hawk has flown
Unthwarted ; marked how his dear blood flecks the grass.
And I've followed the print of his scream through the
threatening dawn :
Rearing his treasure, life, from the gin's foul grasp
Have flung it to Death as one flings a dog a bone.
But the screaming does not end, nor the Threat pass.

I have watched him hunted, beaten, driven, caged ;
Have seen them put out his eyes that he may sing,
Then have listened to his song—seen him running
Lost, lost, lost, and the whole world strange
Because he cannot, cannot, find that loving
And loved and only One whom he knows without change.

I am the childless. I wait at the foot of the Cross
Where I have no right. None ever leads me away ;
I may forever hear his terrible cry
Of a child, since I am no mother. My chartless lot
Only the Listener's, Watcher's . . . . Oh, it is never I
To whom life lends the darling of the womb of God.

MURIEL SPARK

Omen

HERE is the time of watching birds ;
senses mingle and show their hands :
now is the place where the signal stands

that points an omen from both my doors ;
though the street shall talk like a hammer,
walls keep silence over my shoulder.

The wrong key in the right door
ponders the portent. Which window
saw where I have been to morrow ?

where I rocked my house on the water ;
doors moved like an ark turning
back her face, and this is a meaning.

For the unlucky eye never shall taste
the bright bow of my vision again
but this error, bitter as brine

shall blind the eyes that heard the day
before my fairweather foes came,
those that crossed my fingers dumb.

Fault, fault on both my houses—
Speed bonny ark and change your shape
until the ominous birds fly up.

ROBIN SKELTON

Child

TATTERED by light,
the child may see
deception in
an apple tree :

Though singing birds
entrance the bough,
his world is rocked
by here and now

till dark in bed
his moments come
to watch the other
side of sun.

as to his window
silent sky
swings a dreadful
finity.

the blowing wind
throughout his room
curls him smaller
in the gloom

till daylight come
to shred again
his apple tree
with leaf of pain.

MARGARET BEES

Poem

DO not take seriously this humorous greenness,
These coarse-patched trees laid flat against the sky.
The clouds wrinkle with laughter,
And the grasses wink at their mischief's subtlety.

Do not take seriously this silent pressure,
This movement stretching taut, suppressing sound.
So soon the membrane breaks, the green sound spinning
Sings on the tissues of the heart and hand.

For all these things are claimed, seized, captured, wanted,
Fondled as trinkets by delighted hands.
Though for your pleasure, you may take for granted
Ten searching fingers and one silent mouth.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Personal Landscape

YOU shall shape your own landscape for ever
Cut with your eye the large horizon's change
And spread the earth with hair like human skin.

Then see how limbs extol the moving river,
Escape the distance in which they plunge
And dazzled still can comprehend the sun.

Here is your country and the silky skies
Which you observe are silk because you scanned

Their measurements with your contented eyes
And held the waiting earth within your hand.

DAVID MARCUS

Poem

Love cannot hold me out much more of hope
whose part is read before the play is done.
Like pebbles perched upon a windy slope
they cannot alter course once they've begun
although the hill may end in ditch or wall.

Hands eyes and heart may fasten on your face
and lips do well to hold your lips in thrall
—but all they can accomplish is a kiss.

Our minds can act their part upon the stage,
our bodies' joy can give to love its day,
but these performances will not assuage
the troubled wound that bleeds throughout the play.

Loving our best there still will always be
the soul's continuing virginity.

ERIC NIXON

Duddon in Autumn

NO need to climb from here
where bronze and gold October loads
the jerky dale with fire.
See at your feet the tawny quills of grass
bent to the west wind's power,
above your head the contours of flame
running the proud fell's shoulder.
This is the harvest we need not gather
to enjoy,
only the mind and eye's humility employ
to trace the line and interlacing colour
the million golden flames of plant
and burning leaves
hastening the homeward roads.

IRIS BIRTWISTLE

As Winter Dies

PATIENT beneath frost's
Fickle mask the pond withholds
Her single tear: swan-mote
Safe in reed lash. Magnanimous
Trees point hill top

Or huddle as refugees
In gale scourged land, yield
Scarecrow arms that feel
Itch of green glove beneath the nail
Gnarled and expectant fist.

Winter's witch gathers
Tired bones into a final shudder,
Wind is sexton taking to task
Adventurous dust and rotting limb
As the dying month limps home.

THE SCENE IN THE PACIFIC NORTH-WEST

A. Wilber Stevens

THE poetry mentioned below will tend to indicate, rather than necessarily define the current directions of poetry in the Pacific North-West. It should be noted, and noted with care, that the seven young natives of the region represented here are not alone in the vanguard of a truly catholic infusion of creative activity. (Two fairly important poets are not included in this brief survey—Kenneth Gordon and Wendell Anderson.)

Unlike other regions in the United States, where the aesthetic pioneering has been pretty well accomplished and the influence of the "schools" markedly focussed, the Pacific North-West is still the foundling, and too often still the neophyte. The region is self-conscious, over-anxious, and impressionable. On the one hand it will rebel constantly against coterie values in literature, while in earnest succession it will embrace passionately and unequivocally every new literary toy sent its way by indisposed ex-Stalinists to the East and compulsive neuro-anarchists to the South. I venture that a careful and unbiased study of a group of young intellectuals in this area, who came into maturity during the Spanish war and absorbed the Parrington influence, with their subsequent participation in World War II, will reveal a straight faced succession of at least a dozen attitudes, political and artistic, during as many years.

Surprisingly enough, for the purpose of the North-West's development this is as it should be. It is the kind of exploratory eclecticism, which will give a region a stature that is healthy and elastic. Fortunately too, our younger artists are tiring of imported purgatives and are staying in their own rooms to work. No longer is it very important to know what goes on in the tea yard of the Gotham Book Mart, or to ascertain whether Erza Pound *does* get up to New York on week-ends. The urge to seek the gospel "east of the mountains" has lessened.

At present, most poetry of value in the Pacific North-West is centred at the colleges and universities. Here, as elsewhere, in America, poetry is still on the side of being avocational. Of the poets represented below five are connected with institutions of higher learning. Thomas Howells instructs at Whitman College in Walla Walla. He is an academic poet in the finest sense of the word. In the majority of his published work Howells has made use of the academy, without being unmindful of all its secular counterparts:

" Prospero did much with less occasion,
Building an arch of words above a public trance—
A bridge to the privacy of a single mind—
All in the clear daylight of a dazzled pit :
Not Hamlet, not Falstaff could follow that rainbow's end."

Kenneth O. Hanson, a graduate student at the University of Washington, is known to many readers of some of the literary quarterlies. His publication list includes *Accent*, *The Tiger's Eye* (a two-dollar-a-line boon to the Un-Elect), and the impetuous *Circle*. Hanson's poetry is condensed, difficult, and more often than not, distinguished. Rebelling constructively against a Mormon background, it has been highly influenced by a meticulous study of the Chinese language and by the work of Erza Pound. In his recent essay, *Some Notes for a Practical Poesy* in *Interim* he has stated more than cogently his point of view :

" Poems are not to be read as analogues to other poems. The poet does not perform someone else's music.
Poetry comes before criticism, as Innocence before the Fall."

Dell Skeels and Wardell Mackay both teach English at the University of Washington. Skeels, an Idahoan, makes a featherlike surreal use of his words. MacKay, while veering dangerously close to the " popular," sustains an honest lyric realism with an unquestionable sense of the cumulative possibilities in a poem :

"All ports of call were my country
In the swaggering hours,
And time stood fast by my side
Slowly turning and pointing
The separate love of desire,
Each ship's bell the knell for the nothing
Behind me in the land-locked homes."
(*First Voyage*)

Carol Ely Harper, who commutes between the wheat fields of eastern Washington and the comparatively precious confines of University Way in Seattle, is very often defeated by her determination to be all inclusive in her work. This often happens to a poet, when too many occasions arise to write too many poems. But in the immense amount of work she has published (including the only book from this group, *To a Faulty Lover*, Swallow Press 1946) Miss Harper reveals an unbelievable amount of energy, almost uncom-

fortable powers of perception, and a willingness to experiment which transcends facility.

Roland Ryder-Smith has some of the bad habits of Miss Harper, but more of the good ones. His poetry is best, when his emotive strength exerts more pressure on his execution than he might wish. For better or for worse he stands in Seattle between the earnest manipulators of the verse "clubs" and the few serious exponents of modern poetry :

> " Hour is when fear, the ghost wind, leans
> To rough the sleekest fur, the smoothest wing
> When aura tentacles of peril ooze upward
> On the timorous air,
> Till one by one
> The great stars fall."
>
> (*Last Wilderness*)

Jan Brevet, Jr. of Portland, of all the poets under consideration is most influenced by the recent war, in which he took part. In a sense, he interprets some of the mass sickness he felt overseas in terms of our present faltering civilian idiom. His poetry will increase in importance, as he continues to probe these common maladies with more contol.

Two or three figures may eventually be considered important. More will simply be credited with laying foundations. Since, for a time at least, much of the important poetry in the Pacific North-West will come from the college campus, it is important for us who teach to realise our responsibilities for counteracting the dual menace in a young academic community—unselective regional opportunism and what is more dangerous, the pedant's fear of new horizons.

The Pacific Nort-West is no longer in a position to call itself potential. While still a foundling, it is a mature foundling. In its capaciousness it should re-exert its efforts towards finding and encouraging more new voices and more new songs.

EZRA POUND: A ROMANTIC RECKONING

Derek Stanford

THE re-publication of Mr. Pound's *Selected Poems* (Faber, 12s. 6d.), first appearing in 1928 and since that time twice more reprinted, is one of those occasions that tempt the reviewer to step outside his narrow scope and hazard a forthright personal judgment.

Of Mr. Pound's widespread influence—his effect on the technique of verse and taste—there can be little reasonable educated doubt; and poets and critics as various as Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and G. S. Fraser have all contributed their tribute of praise. What, however, remains uncertain is the calibre or status this poet enjoys. Is he, or will he prove to be, a major figure, a time-proof master, a source for the future; or has his impact been chiefly historical—that of a male midwife to much contemporary verse?

In this connection it is interesting to see how Mr. Pound himself defines the status of a "master" in his provocative pamphlet, *How to Read*. According to him, all writers of importance are divided into two classes: the "inventors" or "discoverers of a particular process or of more than one mode or processs," and the "master" or "inventors who, apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions." This technical assessment of genius and talent (so tell-tale a reflection, we may suggest, of the poet's repudiated, gadget-ridden fatherland) helps to explain what Mr. T. S. Eliot perspicaciously observes: namely, that many of Pound's most feeling poems are technically less interesting and mature than those in which the feeling lacks the same heightened accent of interest or conviction.

A case of the craftsman retarding the poet? No, hardly, I should say; but rather of some workman who has kept his tools in perfect condition but has seldom received a substantial order. I mean, by this artisan metaphor, that Pound, for the most part, does not convey that sense of urgency or compulsion inherent in the words of the greatest poets. To such a statement I would make exceptions; as when, for example, in *Exile's Letter* (a piece after Rihaku in *Cathay*) he speaks as one of two separated friends:

> "And if you ask how I regret that parting:
> It is like the flowers falling at Spring's end
> —Confused, whirled in a tangle.

What is the use of talking, and there is no end of
talking,
There is no end of things in the heart.
I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees here
To seal this,
And send it a thousand miles, thinking."

or when he writes, in *The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter* (translated from the same poet):

" At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling.
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
For ever and for ever and for ever."

or when, with a new sort of intensity, with a kind of morse lyricism, he writes, in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, such a rare stanza as the following:

" For three years, diabolus in the scale,
He drank ambrosia,
All passes, ANANGKE prevails,
Came end, at last, to that Arcadia."

Here, in these last, terse, hard-bitten verses, we have that species of utterance which is both a "criticism of life," and, at the same time, a deep *cri de coeur*. Concerning the employment of my last phrases, I anticipate criticism from two opposed camps. The older "traditionalist" will probably object—attuned, as they are, to a lax swan-song music—that they can discover no *cri de coeur* in these abrupt unpitying statements; whilst the young neo-classicists may ask me to withdraw any mention of that embarrassing ventricle. Such protests would be a healthy symptom; for the best kind of verse is written neither to justify nor confound the schools; but rather—and quite without deliberate intent—to reconcile them by transcending their discrepancies.

On the whole Mr. Pound does not set us such a problem. For the most part, his verse operates at the lower levels; and the fusion-point where the promptings of the heart and the speech of the head

combine to form one language is seldom evident in his poems. This general absence of the sublime is something which the neo-classicists defend; and we must all be grateful for the gay colloquial moods that Mr. Pound has "naturalised" in poetry for us; for his wit and humour and highbrow *gaminerie*.

Yet wit and humour, too, have their own sublimity, just as surely as have the more "heart-felt" emotions. What else but sublime is Marvell, for example, writing in his poem *To a Coy Mistress*:

> " The Grave's a fine and private place,
> But none I think do there embrace."

or Donne, in describing a lover's dawn:

> " Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
> Why dost thou thus,
> Through windowes and through curtaines call on us?
> Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?
> Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide
> Late schoole boyes, and sowre prentices,
> Goe tell Court-huntsmen, that the King will ride,
> Call countrey ants to harvest offices;
> Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clyme,
> Nor houres, dayes, months, which are the rags of time."

Of this compact poignancy of wit, or humour's extended fantasy, Mr. Pound has very little. His laughter is rather literary. It is *salon* conversation in pleasing cadences; and being such, of course, is a civilising factor in a time when life and letters are severed. All this we readily concede; but there my own appreciation stops.

Strangely enough, in another field of verse—the field of lyrical composition—this imitative inbred literariness gained for Mr. Pound one or two singular triumphs, as when, indebted to Edmund Waller, he wrote his love poem *Envoi*.

According to T. S. Eliot, Mr. Pound's reputation must finally rest upon the merits of his *Cantos*, and all his earlier verse be read in the light of these poems to which they point. On the other hand, we have Mr. Leavis, who sees the poem *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* as a magnificent monumental cause-way leading us out into the sea—that ocean of history called the *Cantos*—on which all traffic of communication ceases. Save for reservations already adumbrated, I incline to agree with the latter judgment.

POETRY AND THE FILM

ERIC NIXON

"*For all things being equally vivid the whole becomes a dream.*"—Coleridge.

THERE is a basic affinity between poetry and films, in that, in both we are presented with a succession of images; it is upon the significance attached to these images that the appeal of the film or poem largely depends. If either contains images which fail to convey their meaning the whole is fractured and therefore unsatisfactory.

We have all met with such flaws. They make all the difference between a masterpiece and an ordinary work of art. Where there are no flaws we have a perfection as significant as a dream—a dreamlike quality which fuses reality with our imaginative mind. For me, poems and films succeed when they attain this perfection. The ability to achieve this perfection is found only in the great poets, and by poets I do not mean only those whose "poems" are written in verse, but also those who use other media for their expression. I have in mind such men as Chirico (the young), Paul Nash, Blake and 'Monk' Lewis.

For a clear example of what I mean by significant images let us take a look at Keat's poem *Hyperion—A Vision.* Here we have a poem of length presented to us as a dream, with a beautiful unravelling of images as emotionally charged as those of a dream:

> "Turning from these with awe, once more I raised
> My eyes to fathom the space every way;
> The embossed roof, the silent massy range
> of columns north and south, ending in mist
> Of nothing; then to eastward where black gates
> Were shut against the sunrise evermore."

and:

> "Then the tall shade, in drooping linens veiled
> Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
> Stirred the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
> About a golden censor from her hand
> Pendent."

These are excerpts taken at random, but which I feel have the exactitude of imagery and attached emotions necessary, and which

if used in a film would succeed in stirring the feelings of an audience at the deeper levels of their being.

But these images are the bricks of the wall and it is upon the sequence of images in relation to the theme that a film's beauty grows. In films time and space can be apparently moved around at will in in order to increase the effect of the images presented. Montage, which is frequently a visual metaphor or simile, is one of the most telling effects. Take another phrase by Keats—"Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms"; here is a first-class subject for montage—trees, snakes or perhaps better an octopus. From such a montage the simile would arise clearly.

These movements of space and time have always been used by poets. The interlinking relationships of all creation are the skeletons upon which they have formed their poems. Poets have fused such elements since poetry was first written and extracted from them the deepest thoughts and feelings.

Arnheim in his book *Film* gives four main principles of montage. (1) The principle of cutting, (2) Time conditions, (3) Space conditions, and (4) Relations of content. All these principles are equally applicable to poetry. The essence of cutting is to produce rhythms which set the pace of the film, just as rhythms in poetry. Time conditions are concerned with events occurring at the same time, jumps of time, etc. These also are used in poetry, particularly in contemporary poetry (i.e. Pound's *Cantos*). Space conditions, the same events at different places, also enter into poetry, at least by inference:

> "And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
> How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm."
>
> (Dylan Thomas).

The fourth principle is in its very nature poetical, since it seeks to reveal parallelism or contrasts or a fusion of both, that is metaphor and simile and the opposites which are partners:

> "the fellow halves that cloven as they swivel
> on casting tides are tangled in the shells."
>
> (Dylan Thomas.)

With such an affinity between the fundamentals of both arts it is not surprising that many of the best films have been those produced by men whose aim was poetical. Such films as *Odd Man Out*, *Citizen Kane*, *Hamlet*, *Dead of Night*, *Thunder Rock*, are essentially poetical, and the establishment of the film as a fully-fledged art depends largely on a continual striving towards this new poetry.

To achieve this the "formula" film must be forgotten and the production of films handed over to those men who have something to say and an individual way of saying it. The greatness of *Hamlet* was achieved because it was produced by one man who had a definite poetical aim. Sir Lawrence Olivier "set out to achieve the poetic truth ordained by Shakespeare by marrying a sensitive intimacy in the acting to a significant austerity of background."

And so I feel that the great films of the future will be the work of poets and their poetic faculty—films of imagination for the imagination, films packed with meaningful images using time and space to magnify their significance—

> " thus to touch time again
> And spin our senses into a web of stars."
> (Mark Holloway).

REVIEWS

The Day's Alarm: Paul Dehn (Hamish Hamilton, 6s. od.).

No Rebel Word: John Hewitt (Muller, 7s. 6d.).

THIS first collection of poems by Paul Dehn is a welcome indication that English Poetry, emerging from the obscurities of the waste lands, is entering a new phase of lyricism in which music and realism are organically interfused. These poems possess the supreme qualities of intelligibility *and* intellectual profundity. They are intensely contemporary in mood, charged with a deep appreciation of the tragic destiny that threatens our civilisation. And this sense of imminent destruction heightens his keen sensitivity to beauty—

> " Remember that we who lived in the creeping shadow
> (Dark over woodland, cloud and water)
> Looked upon beauty always as though for the first time
> And loved all things the more, that might never be seen again."

In *Spring Song* 1948 this sense of impending disaster is poignantly acute:

" Let it be recorded for those who come after
If any are left to come after, that today
Streams melted on the moor, a curlew's song
Wept in remembered sunshine and the long
Cloud-shadows dipped away
Where the west wind blew softer."

In the finely-controlled poem, *Armistice*, he remembers with angry pity the futile waste of war when " . . . . the bread died screaming ; Grangrene was corn, and monuments went mad." *The Sweet War Man is Dead* hovers above the macabre with delicate poise and a bitter, Jacobean humour—

" So must I mourn among the glutted gulls,
Cry to a shark, weep with the fat, white worm
Who turns and nods to me across the stones."

In all these poems Dehn's imagery is original with a modernity that is wrought into the fabric of the verse, whether he is speaking of "the pin-stripe rain" or of a woodpecker who "sits typing in his tree" ; and there is, too, a fine metaphor of a "pony-footed wind" that "kicks on the cobbled water."

Thirty-five, the most ambitious poem in the book, is the author's personal testament. Its refrain, "On the middle night of my life," haunts the poem like the regular tolling of a great bell. Here is gathered his sense of the futility of war, his sensitive love of beauty, his realisation of impending tragedy ; his originality of imagery, his subtle rhymth-control and his gift for a telling phrase :

"Something a man must love or a world ends.
. . . . . God is a river
To whom all gods are tributary ; and I
Seek the main stream on the middle night of my life."

This is not merely a book of promise but of a rare achievement. It will establish Dehn's place in the vanguard of the younger poets.

John Hewitt has an equally personal though very different talent. Some minds are so sensitively gifted that they perceive mood and landscape inextricably fused together. Thought and image mutually reinforce and nourish one another so closely that the imagery itself may be said to be an integral part of the whole poetic experience. *No Rebel Word* reveals John Hewiitt as such a poet. His landscapes are the hills and fields and woods of Antrim, and he has brooded upon them with such loving insight that they have grown into his very selfhood :

" So I because of all the buried men
In Ulster clay, because of rock and glen
and mist and cloud and quality of air
as native in my thought as any here,
who now would seek a native mode to tell
our stubborn wisdom individual,
yet lacking skill in either scale of song,
the graver English, lyric Irish tongue,
must let this rich earth so enhance the blood
with steady pulse where now is plunging mood
till thought and image may, identified,
find easy voice to utter each aright."

His work perhaps lacks colour, variety and fire. His rhythms repeat themselves, sometimes to the point of monotony. But his gifts are rare and positive ; a fine eye for accuracy of detail, a sincerity of spirit and an intellectual depth that is misleading in its simplicity. His subtle music of half-rhymes and assonances is well suited to his meditative themes. He has certain obvious affinities. *The Little Glen*, for instance, is worthy of Edward Thomas. *The Hired Lad's Farewell* and *The Alder Stick* have the dry, flat pungency of Robert Frost. His is the restrained, meditative singing of a conscientious craftsman who has ignored the temptations of a spurious modernity. But when the clamour that surrounds more pretentious voices has faded into silence, these deeply moving and gentle poems by John Hewitt will inherit a slender immortality along with Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Edmund Blunden and Stanley Snaith.

JOHN BARRON MAYS.

Catullus : trans. and introduced by Jack Lindsay (Sylvan Press, 9s. 6d.)

CATULLUS, whom Mr. Jack Lindsay calls "the first great romantic poet" is probably the most accessible to the present English idiom of all the Latin poets. In a way that a universal poet like Virgil could never be, the essential Catullus is unmistakable even in the most free translation. Possibly this is because he was a supreme innovator, as strange a contemporary of Lucretius as was Gerard Manley Hopkins of Robert Bridges.

Mr. Lindsay claims to have rendered Catullus "line for line with the original," a claim which is generally valid. There are times, however, when one could wish the translator had sacrificed his line for line policy to allow himself scope for reproducing echoes of the

resounding Latin cadences, and perhaps he should not have attempted the rhymed line endings which accelerate the tempo of the work to an extent alien to the Latin language.

But the very swiftness of Mr. Lindsay's rendering makes particularly successful certain types of poems, such as the epithalamia. These are translated with admirable style, on a taut, excited note, verse after verse opening and closing like a gate. The famous love poems to Lesbia have also been handled skilfully, although the stanza—

> " Cum suis vivat valeatque moechis
> Quos simul complexa tenet trecentos
> Nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
> Ilia rumpens "

is not instantly recognisable as

> " Bid her be cheerful. Lovers in hordes remain,
> and one is lost in another, tossed abed,
> and she's still heart-untouched as again again
> She drains them hotly dead."

since Catullus surely intended to draw a parallel between this and the next stanza which ends—

> " Ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
> Tactus aratro est."

the deeper meaning being apparent in the theme "lover breaks lover as plough breaks flower," so typical of Cataullus.

But these are exceptional points and, on the whole, Mr. Lindsay has approached his important task with sympathy and the talent for which he is justly recognised. His new arrangement of the poems improve greatly upon the traditional grouping, following as it does the natural and inevitable sequence of the poet's life.

3 0 9 MURIEL SPARK

The Complete Poems of Richard Aldington: (Wingate, 16s. od.).
Dylan Thomas: Henry Treece (Lindsay Drummond, 7s. 6d.).
After Every Green Thing: Dannie Abse (Hutchinson, 5s. od.).

THE would-be assessor of a book containing no less than twelve previous books; nearly four hundred pages, and thirty-five years poetic output might think hastily of a few convenient generalisations. But if it were Mr. Aldington's book he would have to think again. For the essential personal nature of that poet's work prevents any response to such an approach.

We must first understand something of the poet himself—and his introduction provides one or two valuable clues. "In a mere altercation between lowbrows and highbrows I should have to take my stand with the highbrows . . . . . an elite does exist," he says—but he deplores, apparently, the intellectual snob. He believes that a poet should use any knowledge he has "but all parade of erudition is abhorrent to me." His introduction is modest enough but occasionally he fails to restrain those curiously egocentric quirks of mind that suggest the frustrated adolescent with an exaggerated desire to attract attention. Childhood for him was full of hate, full of dreary, depressing places, people, and events:

> "The town was dull;
> The front was dull;
> The High Street and the other street were dull—"

and he was convinced that there was no God, only "avenging gods who plague us for sins we never sinned." This outlook enabled him to write of unknown men and women leaving a cinema:

> "Millions of human vermin
> Swarm sweating
> Along the night-arched cavernous roads.
>
> (Happily rapid chemical processes
> will disintegrate them all")

Himself he likens to a moth vainly beating its "shrivelled wings" against the sides of a matchbox in which a cruel and congenitally perverted world has trapped it. And he becomes the agitator, the tragic lover, the scholar, and even the supporter of settled modes, in his desperate attempt to achieve a personal integration.

He does not, of course, succeed. But he produces a poetry which is emotional and unstudied in its manner, though in the later and longer poems intellect plays a greater part. The later poems are sometimes acridly moving, too; but they uncover a remarkably

edged awareness of the purely aesthetic: imaginative diversity never takes rein from harmony and proportion.

Ultimately, Mr. Aldington's reputation as a poet is likely to rest upon three long poems, *A Fool I' the Forest*, *A Dream in the Luxembourg*, and *The Eaten Heart*, together with one or two of his most recent short poems. Most of the *Images*, *Images at War*, *Images of Desire*, and *Exile* poems are both slight and adolescent: their inclusion could be of interest only to the poetry historian, as a museum exhibit of the "modern poetry revolution." But as Mr. Aldington disclaims connection with "the revolt of 1912" and after, it is difficult to find a justification for their re-issue.

The first collection of Dylan Thomas's poems appeared nearly fourteen years ago. It was explosive. Either he was a new poetic genius, or he was the craziest charlatan who had yet written — it depended which critic you read. As time passed a body of conflicting opinion grew (and continues to grow) around his work and, characteristically, Mr. Thomas himself threw in a few fireworks to help. Very soon scores of young poets were imitating his oddly mannered style—and still do—although no one seemed really quite certain what he was about.

Now, for the first time, we have been given a full length study of his poetry—by his contemporary and friend, Henry Treece. Mr. Treece's own work has been influenced not a little by that of his fellow Welshman, but neither this, nor personal admiration have led him to set aside critical objectiveness in the examination of Mr. Thomas's work. If anything, he tends to be unduly stern. The book opens with a discussion of poetic reaction to the *machine* symbol, traces the Surrealistic development from that point and establishes Mr. Thomas's superior coherence and poetic purposefulness. The debt to Hopkins (without whom there would certainly have been no Thomas, nor a poet anything like him) and a number of less obvious influences are dealt with fully. He is shown as one who possesses the *spirit* of the mediaeval times more truly than the mediaevalists themselves: he has a "profound conviction of doom." In general Mr. Treece has said little with which one would disagree—but one statement seems to me worth challenging. He describes the 18 *Poems* as "the peak beyond which there is no passing, in the same *genre*." In this context "*genre*" is open to varied interpretation but, to me at any rate, it seems that *Deaths and Entrances* (Mr. Thomas's latest book) certainly surpasses the 18 *Poems*, *and* within the meaning of Mr. Treece's statement. Although he had seen most of its poems, *Deaths and Entrances* was not published until after he had written the

present volume. This may explain the brevity of the section which deals with the magnificent achievement of the poet's latest work.

But, in view of the valuable services which Mr. Treece has performed in writing this most absorbing and illuminating book, any complaint would be a churlish ingratitude.

Most of us, I suppose, have at sometime in our lives stood at a high-point of experience when the hard world of external event was suddenly transcended and there seemed to stretch before us a world of colour and light, of beauty, and the sense of "rightness" in things. For a moment we stood, as it were, at the threshold of some great Kingdom—and then—the vision faded and we were left alone, perhaps terribly alone, and wondering.

In his first book, Dannie Abse has collected a number of poems which grew out of experiences of that kind, and to which were added the intellectual reflections of a mind as acutely attuned to external "reality" as to the inner world of imagination and spirit.

Mr. Abse has grown up in the poetic environment of an almost-established romanticism and, like many of his generation, he has looked to Dylan Thomas for a key to his craft. But he has developed a masterly independence of style, so avoiding the unashamed derivativeness which too often characterises the work of Thomas followers. He is a craftsman who relies upon ear rather than eye and most of his poems have that organic quality both of rhythm and form which lends so much to spoken verse. Paradoxically, his principle strength and his principle weakness stem from a single factor; a determined desire to be completely sincere. It is this factor which makes what he says so convincing, but unfortunately, it allows him also to let pass any line, however weak, provided that it appears to contribute to his statement. His emotional and philosophical mainsprings are religious (though in no narrow sense) and the high eroticism which his poetry reveals is brought within his religious terms of reference. Inevitably there is that atmosphere of exile which we have come to recognise as almost a common factor in the work of Jewish poets.

More should be heard of Mr. Abse's work for, though it is high praise, I cannot but feel that this is the best first book by a new poet that I have read in the last five years.

LIONEL MONTEITH

Beyond the Terminus of Stars : Hugo Manning (Phoenix, 5s. od.)
Contemporary Irish Poetry, edited by Robert Greacen and Valentin Iremonger (Faber, 8s. 6d.)
A Horse with Wings : John Harrison (Fortune, 6s. od.).

PARTS of this poem sequence by Hugo Manning will be familiar to readers of poetry publications and it is inevitable that the whole should appear, at first reading, rather less than the sum of the parts. To re-read the poem, however, is to modify first impressions, although the best poem in the sequence remains one of those previously published. Hugo Manning is a very individual poet, in fact there are signs that he sometimes attempts too consciously to eradicate all influences from his work. In this connection, it is interesting to notice that the one section of the sequence that reminds one compellingly of another poet, in this case Dylan Thomas, is the poem referred to above as the best in the book: the ninth poem which begins :

"Come shadows, come drummers in the blood-filled air . . ."

If Hugo Manning was less of a poet than his best work shows him to be, it would be charitable to ignore the occasional lapses from grace. But he is a good poet, who may yet accomplish some considerable work and it is important that he beware of the slick, unconvincing insincerities apparent in one or two instances. The poem in the tenth section begins :

" Who seeks with anger
The bird of love,
Seeks without love
The birdless land."

The second stanza is a similar camouflaged platitude but the second half of this short poem contains some fine writing. One feels that the first two verses, like the opening of the last poem in the book, slipped in while the poet's back was turned and looked so neat, trim and polished that he hadn't the heart to remove them. Certainly their smoothness almost blinds one to their superficiality. So much for the criticism that is necessitated by the quality of the whole poem sequence in which there are so many memorable passages that one is hesitant to select. A verse that torments my memory above all others in the final stanza of the fourth poem :

'Nearer it seems I come to the funeral of God,
Nearer to cold laughter, nothing and no way.
O what is the meaning of the speech of purpose,
What harp of words will tell what it must?
Little green earth still show your singing maiden,
The flute and the citron among steel and dust."

We have already had selections of Welsh and Scottish poetry from Fabers, edited by Keidrych Rhys and Maurice Lindsay respectively. The new anthology of modern Irish poetry completes a useful trio and is, in some ways, the best of the three books, as Irish poets of true native vintage are little known over here, even less than their Scots and Welsh cousins. It was, I suppose, a commercial necessity that prompted the inclusion of so many well-known poems by Day Lewis and MacNeice. For my part, I would rather the space had been devoted to more poems from such intensely Irish writers as John Hewitt, Donagh MacDonagh, Robert Farren and Padraic Fallon. There is a wealth of delightful writing in this volume, so much of it slightly "fey" as one would expect, especially in the dialogue of Raftery and the Whiskey, overheard by Padraic Fallon. Of the other poets represented here, Maurice Craig, Robert Greacen, Sean Jennett, Ewart Milne and W. R. Rodgers, are outstanding. The work of the latter never fails to evoke my enthusiasm and his seven poems included in this collection are a sufficient excuse for giving it my praise.

As is so often the case with first books of poetry by little-known poets, John Harrison has included a great number of verses, written enthusingly about nothing at all in particular, which should have been ruthlessly scrubbed out. He has a real feeling for verbal junketings and there are indications of worth in *Country Dance* and *The Vagrant*. Mr. Harrison must persist in his poetry, without allowing attempts at precocious sophistication to clog up the stream of his lyrical gifts.

B. Evan Owen.